

A II

WASHINGTON POST

8 September 1977

Carter Again Asks Hill to Agree To Sale of Radar Planes to Iran

President Carter asked Congress again yesterday to agree to his controversial offer to sell a modern airborne radar warning system to Iran.

The proposed system would consist of seven advanced radar planes costing about \$1.2 billion. Carter withdrew his plan under congressional pressure last July.

The White House said the President informed Congress that the planes would not be equipped with certain sensitive equipment, and gave other reasons why he thinks the sale would be in the interest of U.S. security.

Among the reasons are that Iran is important to the United States and is a secure source of oil not only for the United States, West Europe and Japan but for Israel as well.

Presidential spokesman Jody Powell said other reasons are that Iran is in an important geographic location, close to the Soviet Union, and has agreed to restrictions placed on the use of the planes.

[A Defense Department study made after Carter's decision to withdraw the offer concluded that the system is the best available for Iran's defense needs, sources said.]

[While another kind of airborne system would be less expensive, the study found, it would require three times as many planes and American personnel as would the Carter program, and would not perform as well.]

[A land-based radar system advocated by the General Accounting Office would be the most expensive of the three options, the study concluded.]

The sale had been opposed by Central Intelligence Agency Director Stansfield Turner, who feared the planes and the secret equipment normally installed in them might fall into Soviet hands.

But Powell said yesterday that Turner had substantially modified his position on security problems after Iran gave assurances about precautions insisted on by the United States.

Powell said the United States, in addition to deleting certain sensitive sub-systems from the planes, would limit the number of Americans involved in the program in Iran.

The Americans would not take part in operational missions, and the planes would be used only for defensive purposes, he said.

"Iran fully understands our restrictions on the use of these aircraft for defensive purposes only and the potential consequences for security relationships [with the United States] if these restrictions are violated," Powell said.

"Adm. Turner has now taken the position that the special measures now contemplated, in combination with Iran's security record in other such situations, will materially reduce the risk of any compromise," Powell added.

The planes are known as AWACS, for Airborne Warning and Control System.

Congress can block the sale of advanced arms if both the Senate and the House adopt resolutions of disapproval within 30 days after they have been notified of the transaction by the President.